

Interim Guidance for Preventing MERS-CoV from Spreading in Homes and Communities

CDC wants to make sure that you are protected if there is ever a case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in the United States. The following guidance may be able to help prevent MERS-CoV from spreading in homes and communities. The guidance is based on what we currently know about other viral respiratory diseases and MERS-CoV. CDC will update this guidance as needed.

This guidance is for:

- ill¹ people being evaluated by a healthcare provider for a possible MERS-CoV infection who can receive care at home and do not need to be hospitalized, and
- caregivers, household members, and other people who have had close contact with someone who is being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection.

People Being Evaluated for MERS-CoV Infection

You should be cared for and isolated in your home if you:

- are ill and are being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection, and
- do not need to be hospitalized for medical reasons.

You should follow the prevention steps below while you are:

- ill and being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection, and
- until a healthcare provider or local or state health department says you can return to your normal activities.

Prevention Steps

Stay home

You should restrict activities outside your home, except for getting medical care. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, and do not use public transportation.

Separate yourself from other people in your home

As much as possible, you should stay in a different room from other people in your home. Also, you should use a separate bathroom, if available.

Call ahead before visiting your doctor

Before your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell him or her that you may have MERS-CoV infection. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are in the same room with other people and when you visit a healthcare provider. If you cannot wear a facemask, the people who live with you should wear one while they are in the same room with you.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can, and immediately wash your hands with soap and water.

Wash your hands

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Avoid sharing household items

You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with other people in your home. After using these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water.

Caregivers and Household Members

If you live with or care for someone at home who is ill and being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection, you should:

- Make sure that you understand and can help the ill person follow the healthcare provider's instructions for medication and care. You should help the ill person with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
 - Have only people in the home who are essential for providing care for the ill person.
 - Other household members should stay in another home or place of residence. If this is not possible, they should stay in another room, or be separated from the ill person as much as possible. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
 - Restrict visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
 - Keep elderly people and those who have compromised immune systems or specific health conditions away from the ill person. This includes people with chronic heart, lung or kidney conditions, and diabetes.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by air-conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.
- Wear a disposable facemask, gown, and gloves when you touch or have contact with the ill person's blood, body fluids and/or secretions, such as sweat, saliva, sputum, nasal mucous, vomit, urine, or diarrhea.
 - Throw out disposable facemasks, gowns, and gloves after using them. Do not reuse.
 - Wash your hands immediately after removing your facemask, gown, and gloves.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and water. You can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and if your hands are not visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid sharing household items. You should not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding, or other items with an ill person who is being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection. After the ill person uses these items, you should wash them thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- Clean all "high-touch" surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, and bedside tables, every day. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, body fluids and/or secretions on them.
 - Wear disposable gloves and gown while cleaning surfaces.
 - Use a diluted bleach solution or a household disinfectant with a label that says "EPA-approved." To make a bleach solution at home, add 1 tablespoon of bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) of water. For a larger supply, add ¼ cup of bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) of water.
- Wash laundry thoroughly.
 - Immediately remove and wash clothes or bedding that have blood, body fluids and/or secretions on them.
 - Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items. Wash your hands immediately after removing your gloves.

- Wash the items with detergent and warm water at the maximum available cycle length then machine dry them.
- Place all used gloves, gowns, facemasks, and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing them with other household waste. Wash your hands immediately after handling these items.
- Follow the guidance for close contacts below.

Close Contacts

If you have had close contact with someone who is ill and being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection, you should:

- Monitor your health for 14 days, starting from the day you were last exposed to the ill person. Watch for these symptoms:
 - Fever (100.4° Fahrenheit or 38° Celsius, or higher). Take your temperature twice a day.
 - Coughing
 - Shortness of breath.
 - Other early symptoms to watch for are chills, body aches, sore throat, runny nose, headache, diarrhea, and nausea/vomiting.
- If you develop symptoms, follow the prevention steps described above, and call your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Before your medical appointment, call the healthcare provider and tell him or her about your possible exposure to MERS-CoV. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people from getting infected. Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department.
- If you do not have any of the symptoms, you can continue with your daily activities, such as going to work, school, or other public areas.

You are not considered to be at risk for MERS-CoV infection if you have not had close contact with someone who is being evaluated for MERS-CoV infection. CDC advises that people follow prevention steps to help reduce their risk of getting infected with respiratory viruses, like MERS-CoV. For more information, see CDC's [MERS website](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/MERS/index.html) (www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/MERS/index.html).

Footnote

1. For this guidance, an ill person is someone who has mild to severe symptoms that are consistent with MERS-CoV infection. This includes a) persons under investigation (PUIs) with symptoms of fever, pneumonia, and/or acute respiratory distress syndrome, and b) close contacts of PUIs who might have symptoms such as chills, body aches, sore throat, runny nose, headache, diarrhea, nausea/vomiting.

This PDF is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/MERS/hcp/home-care-patient.html>.